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United States Senate

October 7, 2009

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Building, Room 122
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Building, Room 122
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Vice-Chairman Cochran:

On October 6th, the Senate adopted by unanimous consent Senate Amendment 2605, which proposes to allocate up to $5 million Consistent with the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board report entitled "The Airborne Tactical Laser (ATL) Feasibility for Gunship Operations" to conduct additional Enhanced User Evaluation of the ATL and enter into an agreement with a Federally Funded Research and Development Center to conduct a system analysis of integrating solid state laser systems onto C-130, B-1 and F-35 platforms for the purpose of close air support.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has a pecuniary interest in this congressionally directed spending item, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 9 of Rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate. I further certify that I have submitted a description of the amendment in the Congressional Record and on my official website, along with the accompanying justification. If you have any questions, contact Dr. Jonathan S. Epstein on my staff at 4-3357.

Sincerely,

Jeff Bingaman
U.S. Senator

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Mr. President, under paragraph 9 of Rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I am here by submitting a description of Senate Amendment 2605 that was accepted by Unanimous Consent to H.R. 3326 as follows

Item: Additional User Evaluation and System Study for Advanced Tactical Laser (ATL)
Request Amount: $5.0M.
Requestor: Boeing Corporation
Address: Boeing – SVS, 4411 The 25 Way NE # 350, Albuquerque, NM 87109-5858
Suggested Location of Performance (major portion of the work): Albuquerque, N.M.

Purpose: Senate Amendment 2605 proposes to allocate up to $5 million Consistent with the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board report entitled "The Airborne Tactical Laser (ATL) Feasibility for Gunship Operations" to conduct additional Enhanced User Evaluation of the ATL and enter into an agreement with a Federally Funded Research and Development Center to conduct a system analysis of integrating solid state laser systems onto C-130, B-1 and F-35 platforms for the purpose of close air support. Such system study shall estimate per unit costs of such laser systems as well costs to operate and maintain each platform with the laser system

Why Spending is in Interest to the Taxpayer: The Air Force Scientific Advisory Board report entitled "The Airborne Tactical Laser (ATL) Feasibility for Gunship Operations" made a number of recommendations regarding the Advanced Tactical Laser, in addition to phasing out the ATL Chemical Laser System and transitioning to an electric laser system, the Board recommended that additional Enhanced User Evaluations take place of the integrated laser-gunship system so that the most data possible can be collected of the funds spend to date on operational aspects of the tactical laser system regardless of laser characteristics. In addition, the board questioned the utility of placing tactical laser systems on high speed platforms such as the F-35 and B-1, which were not designed for low speed, long-loiter close air support missions and recommended a system study of the available platforms to understand the cost per unit of integrating the laser onto each platform as well as long-term operations and maintenance costs with each integrated system. Senate Amendment 2605 carries out the recommendations of the Board to get the best benefit of the taxpayer's dollar spent to date and into the future on tactical laser systems under development by the Air Force.